

ter penetrating all bodies from the perception of attracted iron filings, although an immediate perception of this matter is impossible for us given the constitution of our organs. For in accordance with the laws of sensibility and the context of our perceptions we could also happen upon the immediate empirical intuition of it in an experience if our senses, the crudeness of which does not affect the form of possible experience in general, were finer. Thus wherever perception and whatever is appended to it in accordance with empirical laws reaches, there too reaches our cognition of the existence of things. If we do not begin with experience, or proceed in accordance with laws of the empirical connection^a of appearances, then we are only making a vain display of wanting to discover or research the existence of any thing. ^bHowever, a powerful objection against these rules for proving existence mediately is made by **idealism**, the refutation of which belongs here.

* * *

Refutation of Idealism⁸³

Idealism (I mean **material** idealism) is the theory that declares the existence of objects in space outside us to be either merely doubtful and **indemonstrable**, or else false and **impossible**; the **former** is the **problematic** idealism of Descartes, who declares only one empirical assertion (*assertio*), namely **I am**, to be indubitable; the **latter** is the **dogmatic** idealism of Berkeley, who declares space, together with all the things to which it is attached as an inseparable condition, to be something that is impossible in itself, and who therefore also declares things in space to be merely imaginary.⁸⁴ Dogmatic idealism is unavoidable if one regards space as a property that is to pertain to the things in themselves; for then it, along with everything for which it serves as a condition, is a non-entity. The ground for this idealism, however, has been undercut by us in the Transcendental Aesthetic. Problematic idealism, which does not assert anything about this, but rather professes only our incapacity for proving an existence outside us from our own by means of immediate experience, is rational and appropriate for a thorough philosophical manner of thought, allowing, namely, no decisive judgment until a sufficient proof has been found. The proof that is demanded must therefore establish that we have **experience** and not merely **imagination** of outer things, which cannot be accomplished unless one can prove that even our **inner experience**, undoubted by Descartes, is possible only under the presupposition of outer experience.

^a *Zusammenhang*

^b The following sentence, the ensuing "Refutation of Idealism," and its proof and the subsequent remarks are all added in the second edition (B 274-9).

Theorem

The mere, but empirically determined, consciousness of my own existence proves the existence of objects in space outside me.

Proof

I am conscious of my existence as determined in time. All time-determination presupposes something **persistent** in perception. This persistent thing, however, cannot be something in me, since my own existence in time can first be determined only through this persistent thing.^a Thus the perception of this persistent thing is possible only through a **thing** outside me and not through the mere **representation** of a thing outside me. Consequently, the determination of my existence in time is possible only by means of the existence^b of actual things that I perceive outside myself. Now consciousness in time is necessarily combined with the consciousness of the possibility of this time-determination: Therefore it is also necessarily combined with the existence^c of the things outside me, as the condition of time-determination; i.e., the consciousness of my own existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of the existence of other things outside me.

B 276

Note 1. One will realize that in the preceding proof the game that idealism plays has with greater justice been turned against it. Idealism assumed that the only immediate experience is inner experience, and that from that outer things could only be **inferred**, but, as in any case in which one infers from given effects to **determinate** causes, only unreliably, since the cause of the representations that we perhaps falsely ascribe to outer things can also lie in us. Yet here it is proved that outer experience is really immediate,* that only by means of it is possible not,

B 277

* The **immediate** consciousness of the existence of outer things is not presupposed but proved in the preceding theorem, whether we have insight into the possibility of this consciousness or not. The question about the latter would be whether we have only an inner sense but no outer one, rather merely outer imagination. But it is clear that in order for us even to imagine something as external, i.e., to exhibit it to sense in intuition, we must already have an outer sense, and by this means immediately distinguish the mere receptivity of an

B 276

B 277

^a According to the revised preface (Bxxxix), this sentence is to be replaced by the following: "This persistent thing, however, cannot be an intuition in me. For all grounds of determination of my existence that can be encountered in me are representations, and as such require something persistent that is distinct even from them, in relation to which their change, thus my existence in the time in which they change, can be determined."

^b *Existenz*

^c *Existenz*

to be sure, the consciousness of our own existence, but its determination in time, i.e., inner experience. Of course, the representation **I am**, which expresses the consciousness that can accompany all thinking, is that which immediately includes the existence^a of a subject in itself, but not yet any **cognition** of it, thus not empirical cognition, i.e., experience; for to that there belongs, besides the thought of something existing, intuition, and in this case inner intuition, i.e., time, in regard to which the subject must be determined, for which outer objects are absolutely requisite, so that inner experience itself is consequently only mediate and possible only through outer experience.⁸⁵

B 278

Note 2. All use of our faculty of cognition in experience for the determination of time agrees with this completely. Not only can we perceive^b all time-determination only through the change in outer relations (motion) relative to that which persists in space (e.g., the motion of the sun with regard to the objects on the earth);⁸⁶ we do not even have anything persistent on which we could base the concept of a substance, as intuition, except merely **matter**, and even this persistence is not drawn from outer experience, but rather presupposed *a priori* as the necessary condition of all time-determination, thus also as the determination of inner sense in regard to our own existence through the existence^c of outer things. The consciousness of myself in the representation **I** is no intuition at all, but a merely **intellectual** representation of the self-activity of a thinking subject. And hence this **I** does not have the least predicate of intuition that, as **persistent**, could serve as the correlate for time-determination in inner sense, as, say, **impenetrability** in matter, as **empirical** intuition, does.⁸⁷

B 279

Note 3. From the fact that the existence^d of outer objects is required for the possibility of a determinate consciousness of our self it does not follow that every intuitive representation of outer things includes at the same time their existence, for that may well be the mere effect of the imagination (in dreams as well as in delusions); but this is possible merely through the reproduction of previous outer perceptions, which, as has been shown, are possible only through the actuality of outer objects. Here it had to be proved only that inner experience in general is possible only through outer experience in general. Whether this or that

outer intuition from the spontaneity that characterizes every imagining. For even merely to imagine an outer sense would itself annihilate the faculty of intuition, which is to be determined through the imagination.

^a *Existenz*

^b Following Erdmann, reading "*wahrnehmen*" instead of "*vornehmen*."

^c *Existenz*

^d *Existenz* here and in the remainder of this sentence.

Section III. Systematic representation of all synthetic principles

putative experience is not mere imagination must be ascertained according to its particular determinations and through its coherence with the criteria of all actual experience.

* * * >

^aFinally, as far as the third postulate is concerned, it pertains to material necessity in existence, not the merely formal and logical necessity in the connection of concepts.⁸⁸ Now since no existence^b of objects of the senses can be cognized fully *a priori*, but always only comparatively *a priori* relative to another already given existence, but since nevertheless even then we can only arrive at an existence^c that must be contained somewhere in the nexus of experience of which the given perception is a part, the necessity of existence^d can thus never be cognized from concepts but rather always only from the connection with that which is perceived, in accordance with general laws of experience. Now there is no existence that could be cognized as necessary under the condition of other given appearances except the existence of effects from given causes in accordance with laws of causality. Thus it is not the existence of things (substances) but of their state of which alone we can cognize the necessity, and moreover only from other states, which are given in perception, in accordance with empirical laws of causality. From this it follows that the criterion of necessity lies solely in the law of possible experience that everything that happens is determined *a priori* through its cause in appearance. Hence we cognize only the necessity of **effects** in nature, the causes of which are given to us, and the mark of necessity in existence does not reach beyond the field of possible experience, and even in this it does not hold of the existence^e of things, as substances, since these can never be regarded as empirical effects, or as something that happens and arises. Necessity therefore concerns only the relations of appearances in accordance with the dynamical law of causality, and the possibility grounded upon it of inferring *a priori* from some given existence (a cause) to another existence (the effect). Everything that happens is hypothetically necessary; that is a principle that subjects alteration in the world to a law, i.e., a rule of necessary existence, without which not even nature itself would obtain. Hence the proposition "Nothing happens through a mere accident" (*in mundo non datur casus*)^f

A 226

A 227

B 280

A 228

^a The text common to the two editions resumes here.

^b *Existenz*

^c *Existenz*

^d *Existenz*

^e *Existenz*

^f In the world there is no chance.

is an *a priori* law of nature; likewise the proposition “No necessity in nature is blind, but is rather conditioned, consequently comprehensible necessity” (*non datur fatum*).^a Both are laws of the sort through which the play of alterations is subjected to a **nature of things** (as appearances), or, what is the same thing, to the unity of the understanding, in which alone they can belong to an experience, as the synthetic unity of appearances. Both of these belong to the dynamical principles. The first is properly a consequence of the principle of causality (under the analogies of experience). The second belongs to the principles of modality, which adds to the causal determination the concept of necessity, which, however, stands under a rule of understanding. The principle of continuity forbade any leap in the series of appearances (alterations) (*in mundo non datur saltus*),^b but also any gap or cleft between two appearances in the sum of all empirical intuitions in space (*non datur hiatus*);^c for one can express the proposition thus: “Nothing can enter experience that proves a *vacuum*”^d or even permits it as a part of empirical synthesis.” For as far as concerns the void that one might think of outside of the field of possible experience (the world), this does not belong to the jurisdiction of the mere understanding, which only decides about questions concerning the use of given appearances for empirical cognition, and it is a problem for ideal reason, which goes beyond the sphere of a possible experience and would judge about what surrounds and bounds this, and must therefore be considered in the transcendental dialectic. We could easily represent the order of these four propositions (*in mundo non datur hiatus, non datur saltus, non datur casus, non datur fatum*)^e in accordance with the order of the categories, just like all principles of transcendental origin, and show each its position, but the already practiced reader will do this for himself or easily discover the clue to it. However, they are all united simply in this, that they do not permit anything in empirical synthesis that could violate or infringe the understanding and the continuous connection^f of all appearances, i.e., the unity of its concepts. For it is in this alone that the unity of experience, in which all perceptions must have their place, is possible.

Whether the field of possibility is greater than the field that contains everything actual, and whether the latter is in turn greater than the set^g of that which is necessary, are proper questions, and can, to be sure, be

^a There is no fate.

^b In the world there is no leap.

^c There is no hiatus.

^d Inserted in Kant’s copy of the first edition: “The *vacuum physicum* is different from the *vacuum metaphysicum*, in which there is no effect at all.” (E XCVII, p. 36; 23:33)

^e In the world there is no hiatus, there is no leap, there is no chance, there is no fate.

^f *Zusammenhange*

^g *Menge*

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solved synthetically, though they also fall under the jurisdiction of reason alone; for they mean, roughly, to ask whether all things, as appearances, belong together in the sum total and the context of a single experience, of which each given perception is a part which therefore could not be combined with any other appearances, or whether my perceptions could belong to more than one possible experience (in their general connection).^a The understanding gives *a priori* to experience in general only the rule, in accordance with the subjective and formal conditions of sensibility as well as of apperception, which alone make it possible. Even were they possible, we could still not conceive of and make comprehensible other forms of intuition (than space and time) or other forms of understanding (than the discursive form of thinking, or that of cognition through concepts); and even if we could, they would still not belong to experience, as the sole cognition in which objects are given to us. Whether other perceptions than those which in general belong to our entire possible experience and therefore an entirely different field of matter can obtain cannot be decided by the understanding, which has to do only with the synthesis of that which is given. Otherwise the poverty of our usual inferences through which we bring forth a great realm of possibility, of which everything actual (every object of experience) is only a small part, is very obvious. “Everything actual is possible” – from this there follows naturally, in accordance with the logical rules of conversion, the merely particular proposition, “Something possible is actual,” which then seems to mean as much as “Much is possible that is not actual.” It certainly looks as if one could increase the number of that which is possible beyond that of the actual, since something must be added to the former to constitute the latter. But I do not acknowledge this addition to the possible. For that which would have to be added to the possible would be impossible. All that can be added to my understanding is something beyond agreement with the formal conditions of experience, namely connection with some perception or other; but whatever is connected with this in accordance with empirical laws is actual, even if it is not immediately perceived. However, that another series of appearances in thoroughgoing connection with that which is given to me in perception, thus more than a single all-encompassing experience, is possible, cannot be inferred from that which is given, and even less without anything being given at all; for without matter^b nothing at all can be thought. That which is possible only under conditions that are themselves merely possible is not possible **in all respects**. But this is the way the question is taken when

B 283

A 231

B 284

A 232

^a *Zusammenhänge*

^b *Stoff*, i.e., matter as contrasted to form, rather than matter in a specifically physical sense.

one wants to know whether the possibility of things extends further than experience can reach.⁸⁹

B 285 I have only mentioned these questions in order not to leave a gap in what according to common opinion belongs among the concepts of the understanding. In fact, however, absolute possibility (which is valid in every respect) is no mere concept of the understanding, and can in no way be of empirical use, rather it belongs solely to reason, which goes beyond all possible empirical use of the understanding. Hence we have had to satisfy ourselves here with a merely critical remark, but otherwise left the matter in obscurity pending further treatment later on.

A 233 Since I would now conclude this fourth section, and with it at the same time the system of all principles of the pure understanding, I must still provide the reason^a why I have called the principles^b of modality "postulates." I will not here take this expression in the significance that, contrary to the usage^c of mathematics, to whom it nevertheless properly belongs, some recent philosophical writers⁹⁰ have used it, namely that postulation means the same as putting a proposition forth as immediately certain without justification or proof; for if we were to allow that synthetic propositions, no matter how evident they might be, could claim unconditional acceptance without any deduction, merely on their own claim, then all critique of the understanding would be lost, and, since there is no lack of audacious pretensions that common belief does not refuse (which is, however, no credential),^d our understanding would therefore be open to every delusion, without being able to deny its approval to those claims that, though unjustifiable, demand to be admitted as actual axioms in the very same confident tone. When, therefore, a determination is added *a priori* to the concept of a thing, then for such a proposition if not a proof then at least a deduction of the legitimacy of its assertion must unflinching be supplied.

B 286

A 234 The principles of modality are not, however, objective-synthetic, since the predicates of possibility, actuality, and necessity do not in the least augment the concept of which they are asserted in such a way as to add something to the representation of the object. But since they are nevertheless always synthetic, they are so only subjectively, i.e., they add to the concept of a thing (the real), about which they do not otherwise say anything, the cognitive power whence it arises and has its seat, so that, if it is merely connected in the understanding with the formal conditions of experience, its object is called possible; if it is in connection^e with per-

^a Grund

^b Principien

^c Sinn

^d Kreditiv

^e Beziehung

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ception (sensation, as the matter of the senses), and through this determined by means of the understanding, then the object^a is actual; and if it is determined through the connection^b of perceptions in accordance with concepts, then the object is called necessary. The principles of modality therefore do not assert of a concept anything other than the action of the cognitive faculty through which it is generated. Now in mathematics a postulate is the practical proposition that contains nothing except the synthesis through which we first give ourselves an object and generate its concept, e.g., to describe a circle with a given line from a given point on a plane; and a proposition of this sort cannot be proved, since the procedure that it demands is precisely that through which we first generate the concept of such a figure. Accordingly we can postulate the principles of modality with the very same right, since they do not augment* their concept of things in general, but rather only indicate the way in which in general it is combined with the cognitive power.^c

* * *

* **Through the actuality** of a thing I certainly posit more than possibility, but not **in the thing**; for that can never contain more in actuality than what was contained in its complete possibility. But while possibility was merely a positing^d of a thing in relation^e to the understanding (to its empirical use), actuality is at the same time its connection with perception.

^e *Zusammenhänge*

^a *Object*

^b *Zusammenhang*

^c The following series of notes is inserted in Kant's copy of the first edition at A 234–5, presumably constituting notes made for the "General Remark" that he adds at this point in the second edition:

"Now comes the proposition: how are synthetic *a priori* propositions possible." (E XCVIII, p. 37; 23:33)

"Finally: How are synthetic *a priori* propositions possible through concepts, how are they possible through the construction of concepts?" (E XCIX, p. 37; 23:33)

"On the possibility of an *ars characteristica vel combinatoria*." (E C, p. 37; 23:33)

"It is remarkable that for these postulates we must always have a mechanical medium[:] either a model as a string that lies, or the motion of this string around a point." (E CI, p. 37; 23:33)

"That all principles and synthetic *a priori* propositions in general do not go further than objects of experience, and that if we would still go beyond them then no intuition can correspond to them." (E CII, p. 38; 23:33–4)

"That the pure laws of understanding also teach nothing further than the laws under which alone experience in general is possible, not the particular laws of the objects of experience. But that the laws of appearances (which are merely in us) thus have their seat and origin in the understanding, therefore also in us, is not to be marveled at. Indeed it is not possible to cognize a law with its necessity in such a way that we could have cognized it otherwise than in our own understanding. The chemical laws are not laws so much as rules of nature." (E CIII, p. 38; 23:34)

^d *Position*

^e *Beziehung*

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*Critique of
pure reason*

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, United Kingdom
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

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First published 1998

Printed in the United States of America

Typeset in Janson

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kant, Immanuel, 1724-1804.

[Kritik der reinen Vernunft. English]

The critique of pure reason / edited [and translated] by Paul
Guyer, Allen W. Wood.

p. cm. - (The Cambridge edition of the works of Immanuel Kant)
Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-35402-1 (hardcover)

I. Knowledge, Theory of. 2. Causation. 3. Reason. I. Guyer,
Paul, 1948- II. Wood, Allen W. III. Title. IV. Series: Kant,
Immanuel, 1724-1804. Works. English. 1992.

B2778.E5G89 1998

121 - dc21 97-2959

*A catalog record for this book is available from
the British Library*

ISBN 0 521 35402 1 hardback